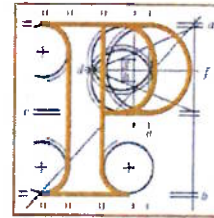


**Our Case Number:** ABP-317809-23

**Planning Authority Reference Number:**



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

Sandra Knowles  
12 imleach  
The Swan  
Co. Laois

**Date:** 09 October 2023

**Re:** Proposed Coolglass windfarm and related works

In the townlands of Fossy Upper, Aghoney, Gorreelagh, Knocklead, Scotland, Brennanshill, Monamantry, Coolglass, Crissard and Kylenebehy, Co. Laois.

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Bord Pleanála has received your recent submission in relation to the above mentioned proposed development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter. Please accept this letter as a receipt for the fee of €50 that you have paid.


The Board will revert to you in due course with regard to the matter.

Please be advised that copies of all submissions / observations received in relation to the application will be made available for public inspection at the offices of the local authority and at the offices of An Bord Pleanála when they have been processed by the Board.

More detailed information in relation to strategic infrastructure development can be viewed on the Board's website: [www.pleanala.ie](http://www.pleanala.ie).

If you have any queries in the meantime, please contact the undersigned officer of the Board or email [sids@pleanala.ie](mailto:sids@pleanala.ie) quoting the above mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence with the Board.

Yours faithfully,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Evan McGuigan  
Executive Officer  
Direct Line:

PA04

**Teil**  
**Glaao Áitiúil**  
**Facs**  
**Láithreán Gréasáin**  
**Ríomhphost**

**Tel** (01) 858 8100  
**LoCall** 1890 275 175  
**Fax** (01) 872 2684  
**Website** [www.pleanala.ie](http://www.pleanala.ie)  
**Email** [bord@pleanala.ie](mailto:bord@pleanala.ie)

64 Sráid Maoilbhríde  
Baile Átha Cliath 1  
D01 V902

64 Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1  
D01 V902

An Bord Pleanála  
64 Malborough Street  
Dublin 1

1<sup>st</sup> October 2023

AN BORD PLEANÁLA	
LDG-	06 7 007-23
ABP-	
04 OCT 2023	
Fee: €	50
Type:	C954
Time:	
By:	HGN4

**Case Reference: PA11.317809**

**Development address; I the townlands of Fossy Upper, Aghoney, Gorreelagh, Knocklead, Scotland, Brennanshill, Monamantry, Coolglass, Crissard and Kilenabehy, Co. Laois.**

**Proposed Coolglass Windfarm and related works**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I Sandra Knowles (The Swan Walking Group) write in connection with the above listed planning application. As a local resident with knowledge of the location, I wish to object to the proposed development by Statkraft. Listed below are **some** of my **summarised** observations and concerns.

The proposed windfarm development serves no function if it cannot be connected to the national grid. Connection to the national grid is fundamental to the entire project and the cumulative effect of both must be assessed according to the EIA Directive. The Bord needs to regard this proposal as premature in the absence of a grid connection application.

The locations of these two clusters of turbines are on two different sites - one on Fossy Mountain and the other on the townlands of Wolfhill, presented by the developer as one site is disingenuous and misleading.

The Bord needs to regard the cumulative effects of both sites of this proposed windfarm on Fossy Mountain and Wolfhill named by the developer as 'Coolglass Windfarm', combined with the following projects which have already secured planning permission.

- a. EirGrid's Laois Kilkenny Reinforcement Project (Coolnabacky 400kv Substation).
- b. 18 No. wind turbines in the nearby townlands of Ballinclogh Upper, Garryglass, Clarabarracum, Clontycoe, Dooary, Cloncullane, Crubeen, Cullenagh, Rahanavagh and Raheenduff. Ref.11.242626 (Laois County Council).
- c. 11. No. wind turbines Pinewoods Wind Farm Ref. PL11.248518 (An Bord Pleanala).
- d. 300 Acre Solar Farm at Bigbog, Coolnabacky, Esker, Money Lower and Loughteeog, Stradbally. Ref.17/532 (Laois County Council).

The Bord must consider the cumulative effects of this proposed development along with the other granted developments mentioned above, all of which are within a 10km radius of the subject development. The Bord must consider the visual impact on the rural scenic landscape close to the Heritage village of Timahoe and the rural scenic uplands of the Coolglass, Aghadreen, Moyad, Scotland, Wolfhill, and Slatt areas. The proposed development alone would form a visually obtrusive feature in the landscape and negatively impact the nationally significant archaeological, heritage sites and sacred spaces. (2003\_ Unesco Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage) and (European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage).

The location for the proposed development is in an area not open for consideration by the Laois County Development Plan and deemed unsuitable for wind development due to the sensitive environment. The proposed development sits in a Water Source Protection Zone (see CDP map 10.4). The Swan public water scheme identified by the EPA as being 'vulnerable and without an alternative source' is fed by the entire area of the proposed Wolfhill cluster. Water courses and streams which originate throughout the catchment of the proposed windfarm development, ultimately feed the River Nore and River Barrow, which are both noted for its sensitive stocks of fresh water pearl mussels and crayfish. The Bord needs to have regard in particular to the cumulative effect with regard to Margaritifera Margaritifera, Durrovensis, which requires protection under Directive 92/43/EEC, on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna.

Laois is well known for its peregrine falcons. The bord must consider the locally known established nesting sites of the identified and documented pairs of ringed peregrine falcons, and their yearly chicks located between Slatt, Spink and Dunamaise. The nesting site in Slatt is only meters from the proposed turbines on the Wolfhill site. The hunting ground of the peregrine falcons nesting at Slatt is directly over the proposed turbine area on Wolfhill and the surrounding area (Birdwatch Ireland/NPWS). The bord must consider the cumulative effects of the Coolglass windfarm project in conjunction with the above mentioned projects already granted permission. I urge in the strongest possible way not to hinder the feeding ground of these protected birds. In accordance with the EU Habitats Directive, these birds must be protected.

According to the guidelines issued by The Bat Conservation Council of Ireland(2012), Wind Turbine/Wind Farm Development a preliminary desktop study should include all details of known bat roosts, bat activity and other records of these animals from within a 10km radius of the proposed wind turbine development. The bord needs to consider the cumulative effects of Coolglass windfarm development in conjunction with the above mentioned projects on the locally known bat populations and all wildlife in accordance with EU Habitats Directive.

The developer cannot mitigate against the noise of a 180mtr turbine with a setback distance of approximately 700mtrs to the nearest homes. The developer cannot realistically mitigate how the uphill/downhill gradient will treat the noise from turbines of this measure and what effect it will have on the nearest homes. This development is too close to the homes of local people for turbines of this scale.

The board must consider the cumulative effects of the Coolglass windfarm development in conjunction with the above mentioned projects already granted permission, on the local community and its people. The community has had no meaningful engagement with the developer Statkraft. Glossy brochures delivered through letter boxes does not constitute public participation. No public meetings were held with the community. Therefore, we were obliged to have our own public meetings in the local halls of The Swan and Timahoe to discuss our concerns regarding the environment and protection of our homes. (Article 7 Aarhus Convention) We are a civilised community of people, all with our concerns of climate change and willing to play our part.

I respectfully urge that planning permission for this development be refused.

I enclose 50 Euro in respect of this objection. All correspondence in this matter can be sent to me at:

Address: 12 ImLEACH

THE SWAN

CO. LAOIS

Yours sincerely

Sandra Keefe

(The Swan Walking Group)

An Bord Planála

64 Marlborough Street

Rotunda

Dublin 4

D01 V902

Case Reference: PA11.317809

Development Address: In the townlands of Fossey Upper, Aghoney, Gorrelagh, Scotland, Brennan's Hill, Monamanny Coolglass, Crissard and Kilenabehy, Co. Laois

Proposed: Coolglass Windfarm and related works

Dear Sir/Madam

I Sandra Knowles on behalf of the Swan Walking Group

We are a local walking group from The Swan and Wolfhill areas.

I set this group up during covid-19 to help others like myself who were struggling at the time with isolation, fear, loneliness and all the other effects the pandemic left us with. It started out as a handful of is walking two metres apart and has now grown into a group of 20 + members.

We meet every Monday as a group to use the hiking trails in Kyle and Fossey. We use these trails in the local forestry area for our annual Darkness into light walk, other charity events, and our children enjoy nature walks, halloween events and much more.

We meet and walk to increase our health, mental health and social interaction, recognising the trails as a multipurpose resource with wide ranging benefits including enhancement of landscape, ecology an heritage.

Also of growing relevance is the role of forest recreation in promoting people's health. Attractive and accessible woodlands have encouraged more and more people tto join our group and get outdoors to take regular physical exercise, which is a key component in strategies aimed at tackling heart disease and obesity. The natural sights and sounds of the forest and woodland also calm us and promote a sense of well-being. This link between trees and forests and health is well-documented. Trail walking and hiking was identified as the main tourism and recreation potential for our community.

In Chapter 5 it is stated that there will be an impact on our trails due to construction. We as a group would have been prepared to come up with an alternative solution to the closure if we had had a consultation with the developers to understand fully the area which would be closed and sought alternative routes.

### 5.8.3 Potential Effects- Construction

#### 5.8.3.1 Wind Farm and TDR

During the construction phase of the Proposed Development, construction works have potential to cause impacts on recreation, amenity and tourism activities within the vicinity of the site. This is likely to occur within 500m of the construction site and has potential to impact on:

The Swan Loop – passes directly through development site

Fossey Mountain - passes directly through development site

It is therefore likely that the construction phase of the Proposed Development will directly impact on the above recreation trails.

It is understood that walkers and hikers use Coillte forest tracks as part of Coillte's Open Forest Policy. The construction phase of the Proposed Development will involve the temporary closure of forestry tracks within the site known as the Fossy Mountain Loop in the northern cluster and the Swan Loop in the southern cluster. This is expected to last intermittently over an 18 month period during the construction phase of 10 years.

Therefore, a moderate, temporary impact to these trails will occur due to closure during the construction phase of the Proposed Development. As such, the predicted significance of the effect applies to all permutations with the range.

Other recreation trails in proximity to the site include the Swan Loop which passes directly through the Site, the Slieve Margy Way, Esker Walk, and Timahoe to Clopook which are located between 1.3 and 1.5 km from the Site. Although the tracks associated with these trails will not be closed to the public, there is potential for indirect impact due to increased construction traffic which may cause dust and noise nuisance in proximity to these recreation trails.

It is also stated that construction would have the potential for health and safety hazards for the general public.

5.9.2.1 Wind Farm and TDR The construction phase of the Proposed Development has potential to create health and safety hazards for both construction workers and the general public. This is as a result of construction activities and the associated impacts including increased traffic, transport of heavy or bulky materials, noise emissions, dust emissions, construction on public roads, excavation and general site-safety.

Potential health and safety hazards may occur on public roads and adjacent land uses including agricultural lands and forestry lands and associated recreation uses (forestry tracks). Existing forestry tracks within the site will be intermittently closed to the public during the construction stage which may cause confusion for recreation users.

We are also concerned about the operation of the turbines as our walking group uses trails directly effected by the placement of turbines.

I enclose €50 in respect of this objection. All correspondence in this matter can be sent directly to me at 12 Imleach,

The Swan

Co. Laois

Yours Sincerely

Sandra Knowles

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sandra Knowles". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'S'.